

Mrs. VUCANOVICH. Mr. Speaker, why do we call it welfare? Under the current welfare system, people do not fare well—not at all.

Our current system has created a number of welfare addicts, some who will do anything to stay on the public dole. Congress must intervene with some tough love which will stop the addiction and create a more useful, caring society. The welfare plan which is being put forth by the Republicans is the only proposal which has offered people on welfare a chance to improve their lives.

While opponents have termed this proposal mean-spirited, it is nothing of the kind. Under the legislation, spending for school meals will increase by 4 percent next year, work training will be offered in exchange for benefits, and abuses of the system will be eliminated. What is mean-spirited is an administration which keeps feeding the addiction of individuals who cannot help themselves because they are trapped. The Republican proposal offers people an opportunity to break the addiction.

Mr. Speaker, it is time for Congress and the American public to say farewell to our current welfare system so that people in our Nation may actually fare well.

HUNGRY CHILDREN AT RISK IN MOVE TO BLOCK GRANT THE SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM

(Mr. BALDACCI asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. BALDACCI. Mr. Speaker, block granting the School Lunch Program, as called for in Contract With America, places our Nation's most precious natural resource—its children—at risk.

We can and should look for ways to improve the School Lunch Program. But we cannot create a block grant, cut the funding, and expect the States to do more with less.

This is not, as some would have us believe, a deficit reduction issue. We need to balance the Federal budget. But we cannot do it on the backs of children. Helen Rankin, a school food service director in Maine, expressed this sentiment very eloquently to me. She said:

As an adult, I am willing to make sacrifices to reduce the deficit, but let us not begin by slashing funds for defenseless children who cannot speak for themselves and do not have the right to vote. As we look after the hungry children of the world, let us continue to protect our own.

This is an ill-considered and mean spirited proposal, and it should be soundly rejected by this Congress.

RESPONSIBILITY, FREEDOM, AND COMPASSION

(Mrs. MYRICK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. MYRICK. Mr. Speaker, mean spirited and callous and heartless.

These are the terms the Democrats use to describe the welfare proposals moving through the House currently. As a former mayor of Charlotte who has seen firsthand the damage done by the welfare system over the years, I prefer the words responsibility, freedom, and compassion. Responsibility to be allowed to work and freedom to get off of welfare, compassion, caring, helping.

We had programs in our city that were innovative and they allowed people to take pride in themselves once again. We can do that through the proposals being offered by the Republican system that is currently underway now. Self-sufficiency is the key, not dependency.

IS CONGRESS LOSING ITS SENSE OF PRIORITIES?

(Mr. LUTHER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. LUTHER. Mr. Speaker, a great American and fellow Minnesotan, Hubert Humphrey, once said that the moral test of government is how that government treats those who are in the dawn of life, the children; those who are in the twilight of life, the elderly; and those who are in the shadows of life—the sick, the needy, and the handicapped.

For decades there has been bipartisan agreement in Congress on the importance of providing school lunches, and millions of children have been well-fed and well-educated.

But I am concerned today that Congress may be losing its sense of priorities. Clearly, we need to balance the budget. But as we allocate our country's scarce resources, let us be sure to keep things in proper perspective.

Last week this Congress voted to increase defense spending and next week we will consider a proposal to cut funding for school lunches.

That is not what the American people sent us here to do. If we really care about those Americans in the dawn of life, our children, and we should, then we better get our priorities straightened out soon.

SCHOOL LUNCH

(Mrs. CUBIN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mrs. CUBIN. Mr. Speaker, it is a personal disappointment and affront to me that Members of the minority party persist in their attack on our plan to provide nutritious meals to the Nation's schoolchildren.

They claim that by block granting the nutrition programs thousands of children will starve. In plain English, that claim is a life and they know it. Funding for the School Lunch Program will increase by 4½ percent per year, that rate is above inflation but below what liberal Democrats think it should be so they label it a cut. Using ac-

counting methods like this that has us headed for a debtor's prison without a get-out-of-jail-free card.

The only thing we will cut is a layer of Federal bureaucracy in the nutrition programs which will save money and allow the States to do what they do so well, take care of their citizens.

The basic difference in philosophies is all too clear on this issue, after 40 years, Democrats cannot bear the thought of independent States, I myself have all the faith in the world in the ability of our State and local officials.

LOBBYIST REFORM

(Mr. MEEHAN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MEEHAN. Mr. Speaker, the truth is that when that money was cut in committee, it did not take into account future enrollment figures. It did not take into account increases in food prices. They is why it is a cut. And how we can sit here and cut school lunches at a time when the same individuals who had an opportunity to cut lobbyists from paying meals for Members of Congress voted against it? The same Members who would vote to take away the school nutrition programs can be seen on a Tuesday or a Wednesday or a Thursday at the Capital Grill or at Morton's or La Colline or other restaurants around this Capitol having a free lunch paid for by lobbyists. It is a big thick steak.

Let us put that money back into the nutrition program and stop cutting around the issues. We are neglecting children in this country. Let us make investments where we ought to be making them.

WELFARE REFORM

(Mrs. FOWLER asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. FOWLER. Mr. Speaker, the Republican welfare reform plan has been under attack from those who believe that bureaucrats in Washington know what is best for those in need. But after 30 years and \$5 trillion, we know for sure that their way does not work.

No longer can we reward illegitimacy and nonwork. And no longer can we rely on the failed notion that we can just throw more money at the problem. The Personal Responsibility Act will help us end negative incentives and create a system that is leaner, more responsive and more truly compassionate.

The Republican welfare reform plan is based on the notion that giving States the flexibility to develop their own solutions means that we will be able serve those in need better with fewer Federal dollars. Experiments in

States like Florida show that this is the approach we should be taking.

I urge my colleagues to take a stand for positive, commonsense welfare reform and support this legislation.

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DEMOCRATS WANT WELFARE REFORM, BUT NOT EXTREMISM

(Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. EDDIE BERNICE JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I have not heard anyone here on either side of the aisle defend the present welfare system. All of us want change. The difference is, on my side of the aisle, we do not want extremism. We do not want a system that is going to just punish and not find a way out for independence.

I am from Texas, and I can tell the Members that the child nutrition program has been helpful. Every report tells us that once the program started, children are attending school better, their attention span is longer, and they are achieving grades. We cannot, as a nation who cares, send our children through life without some kind of caring.

Mr. Speaker, if we want to create 50 new bureaucracies by sending it to the States, then we will have more government than we ever bargained for. State's rights for poor children in Texas has never worked. One out of every nine children in Texas is now hungry. Almost half of the low-income families are now hungry.

Mr. Speaker, I can tell the Members that most of these families have at least one working person. Are we going to throw our children to the wolves to give a tax break for the rich? I hope not.

WELFARE REFORM: REAL CHANGE VERSUS FALSE HOPE

(Mrs. KELLY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. KELLY. Mr. Speaker, I do not know what is more disheartening, the vicious cycle of dependency perpetuated by the current system of welfare, or the mindset on the part of some Members of this institution that a national welfare bureaucracy is the only way to help those in need.

The American taxpayer has not lacked in generosity. We have invested well over \$5 trillion on welfare in this country since the mid-1960's, and welfare spending continues to rise.

And yet, despite this commitment, illegitimacy rates have risen, welfare dependence remains constant, and fewer recipients of assistance are working. Five million families received AFDC benefits in May 1993, up from 3.7 million in 1988, and over half of those families will remain dependent on welfare for over 10 years.

As working women and mothers, who among us does not remember earning their first paycheck, meeting that first payroll, or the pride of seeing our own child bring home their first paycheck. It is this sort of restoration of self-esteem that we must achieve.

The Personal Responsibility Act of 1995 fundamentally restructures the way in which we think about welfare. It maintains a system of support for those in need, while restoring the notion that welfare recipients have an obligation to use this assistance to better themselves. We have an opportunity to accomplish real reform, and instill real hope in the lives of those caught in the welfare trap.

SAVINGS FROM REPUBLICANS' PLAN TO CUT CHILDREN'S SCHOOL LUNCHES WILL GO FOR TAX CUTS FOR THE WEALTHY

(Mr. EVANS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. EVANS. Mr. Speaker, the Republican plan to decimate the school lunch program will penalize millions of America's kids, working families, and women, and the Republicans will use the savings to serve up a free lunch of tax cuts and tax concessions to millionaires and large multinational corporations.

Conservatives often say that the deficit will be passed on to our kids, but their approach to deficit reduction will mean that our kids will pay now and that they will pay with their potential. Their block grant proposal will block the future of 140,000 kids in Illinois alone.

The school lunch program is one of the most successful, one of the most cost-effective, and one of the most important programs that the Federal Government has ever administered.

I urge my colleagues to stop the Republicans from keeping this program and America's kids hostage to the Republican Contract on America.

REPUBLICANS' WELFARE REFORM PLAN OFFERS A HELPING HAND-UP, NOT A HANDOUT

(Mrs. SMITH of Washington asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Mrs. SMITH of Washington. Mr. Speaker, according to the Congressional Research Service, welfare spending in 1992 reached an all-time high of \$210 billion. This is nearly three times as much as we need to abolish all poverty in the United States.

What does the American taxpayer get for this? What do we have to show for it? I will tell the Members: a bureaucracy that is wasting our money. Even worse, we have higher crime, higher illegitimacy, family disintegration, low educational achievement, neglect, and moral confusion.

Mr. Speaker, I do not think the devil himself could have come up with a better scheme to destroy America and her children. Yet, the Democrats come here day after day to defend a system that has produced nothing but misery for America's poor, and the poor children. They have done this after controlling Congress for over 40 years, building this system of misery.

We have pledged to change the failed liberal welfare system, not by giving a handout, but by giving a helping hand up.

SCHOOL LUNCHES ARE IMPORTANT FOR OUR CHILDREN

(Mr. BENTSEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. BENTSEN. Mr. Speaker, the proposal to change the Child Nutrition Program into block grants will hurt the children of the 25th District in Texas. This week the Texas School Food Service Association visited me and explained the consequences of this proposal.

With the new block grant scheme, which in essence will give fixed sums to the States, Texas will lose big—close to a 30-percent reduction in moneys to the children of Texas. It is estimated for instance that the Houston Independent School District [HISD], one of many school districts in the 25th District, would lose \$1.677 million next year to provide nutritious breakfasts and lunches for children.

I do not believe that HISD will fail to serve these children. Instead other educational programs will have to be cut. If we want our kids to learn and grow up to be productive citizens, we cannot expect them to starve in the process. In many cases, school meals are the only nutritious meals that children will receive each day.

This Republican proposal will actually create 50 new bureaucracies in 50 States. In addition, the new program will not have one national nutritional standard. Without a good meal, many children will have trouble learning. We need to invest in our children to ensure our future. The School Lunch Program today successfully feeds an average of 13 million children each day with a well balanced meal.

Mr. Speaker, as we say at home, don't mess with Texas. Mr. Speaker, don't mess with the kids' school lunch.

TRUE COMPASSION AND THE WELFARE SYSTEM

(Mr. CHABOT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. CHABOT. Mr. Speaker, the so-called political experts say do not respond to your opponents attacks, just ignore them. But in this case I just